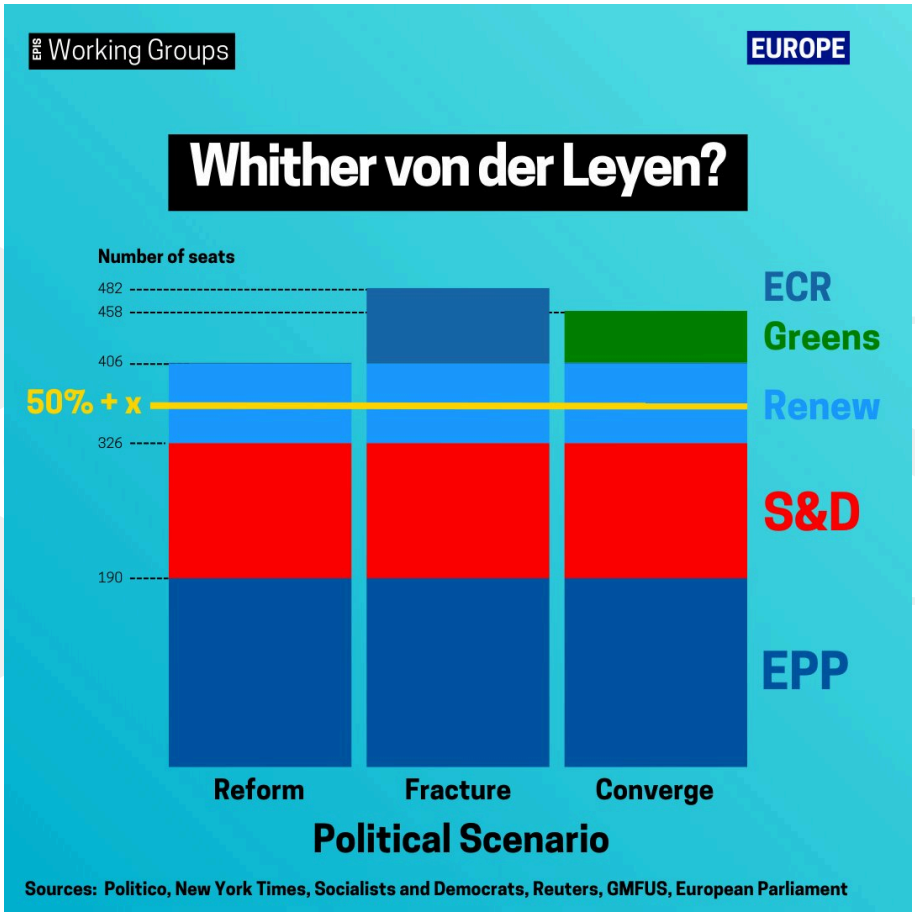
Whither von der Leyen?

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From 6 to 9 June, the EU went to the polls to elect 720 representatives for the European Parliament (EP). The EP experienced a "shift to the right": the centre-right EPP secured the most seats, the Eurosceptic and nationalist ECR and ID made noticeable gains, the centre-left and left S&D and the Left stagnated, and the Greens and the liberal Renew Europe group lost the most representatives. Negotiations over governance in the newly elected EP are now in full swing. Their results have a significant bearing on the future of EU policymaking.

The new distribution of EP seats reveals three possible governing arrangements. First, S&D, EPP and Renew may reform the governing coalition they have in place. The three political groups still hold more

than the 361 seats required for a majority in the EP. A reformed governing coalition would feature a strengthened EPP and a weakened Renew group. Governance may shift towards the right, including a toughened stance on immigration and a relaxed approach to climate. At the same time, such an approach may not hugely affect the current policy priorities and initiatives of the governing coalition.

A second arrangement would feature the same political groups in government, but may receive increased policy input from the ECR. The ECR, EPP, and Renew lack the necessary seats to form a governing coalition. At the same time, the EP has signalled its willingness to collaborate with the ECR; Renew has not ruled out governing with the ECR. In contrast, the S&D seems closed to collaborating with the former. Therefore, an emboldened EPP and weakened Renew may retain their governing arrangement while increasing policy cooperation with the ECR regarding discrete policy areas, including migration. Such an arrangement may provide for a fractious and unstable governing coalition.

Third, the governing coalition may stay intact but include the Greens as a member. Increasing support for the ECR and ID may create a focal point for policymaking for political groups at the centre and to the left of the centre in the EP: fight the opposite side of the body. S&D, Renew, and the Greens have recently signed a declaration calling on the President of the European Commission and democratic parties to reject cooperation with far-right and radical parties. Such policy convergence may happen in the context of the Green Deal and work on the post-2020 multiannual financial framework.

In all cases, the EP is unlikely to contest von der Leyen as President of the European Commission. The current governing arrangement is likely to endure. Similarly, one may expect the support of the body for Ukraine's defence against Russia to continue. At the same time, a rightward shift in the composition of the EP has opened three separate political paths for the political groups of the governing coalition: (1) reform, (2) fracture, or (3) converge. The path they choose will be subject to intense scrutiny at all levels of the EU.

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